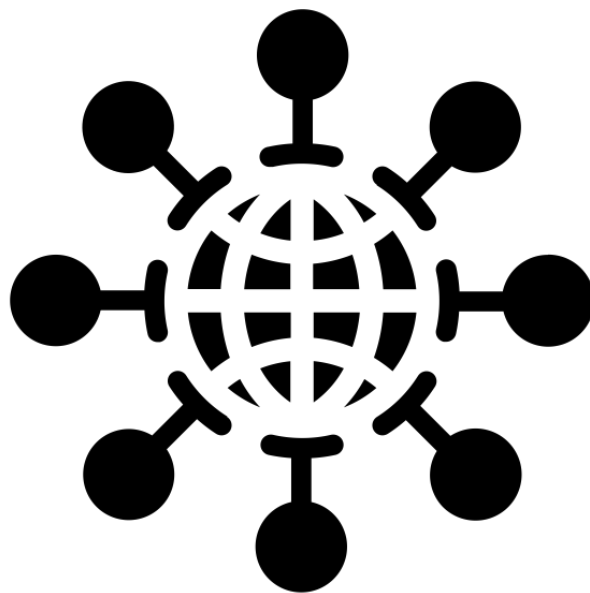


# EVENT READBACK

Virtual Session 1

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: ID

18<sup>TH</sup> August 2023



Part of  
the  
**Inclusion**  
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## About the event:

As part of the Community of Practice: ID Initiative (COP), a virtual event was hosted that invited various community-based entities and researchers to participate around the topics of digital ID and gender inclusion. The participants joined from various geographies in Ethiopia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and India.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual event of the COP was hosted on Zoom on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

India: 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Sri Lanka: 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Ethiopia: 4:00pm - 5:30pm

Philippines: 9:00pm - 10:30pm

The recording of the session will be made available for viewing on:

[inclusion.aapti.in](https://inclusion.aapti.in)

*For queries and collaboration opportunities, please email [kunal@aapti.in](mailto:kunal@aapti.in)*

## Attendees from the Initial Steering Committee (ISC):

Members of the ISC hope to facilitate the initial creation, structure and guidance of the COP initiative.

Dr. Sarayu Natarajan (Advisor)

Mr. Kunal Raj Barua

Ms. Mousmi Panda

Mr. Arun Gurumurthy (Advisor)

Mr. Rohit Ranjan Rai

## Participants for the 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Session of the COP: ID

**Mr. Abraham  
Embaye**

[Digital Opportunity  
Trust](#)

**Ms. Clarisse Gomez  
Ms. Sylvia Garde**

[FIT-ED](#)

**Ms. Dasaman  
Wijesinghe**

[Chrysalis](#)

**Dr. Tessema Bekele**

[Emmanuel  
Development  
Association](#)

**Mr. Elmer Soriano**

[Civika](#)

**Mr. Yosef Akalu**

[Consortium of Self-  
help group  
Approach  
Promoters \(CoSAP\)](#)

**Ms. Nafkot Getinet  
Alemaw**

[Ace Advisors](#)

**Mr. Edris Yesuf**

[F.D.R.E Authority for  
Civil Society  
Organizations](#)

**Ms. Aditi Shah**

[Apti Institute](#)

**Ms. Niharika Betkerur**

**Ms. Srija Gadamsetti**

[MOSIP](#)

We thank all the participants for joining the first virtual meeting of the COP. For the interested entities that were unable to attend, your presence was truly missed, and we hope that you can join us for future virtual meetings. We hope that this note concisely encapsulates the first virtual meet and the sessions within.

## Event Agenda

The virtual meet started with a context-setting session on the COP initiative. This was followed by two knowledge sessions on the theme, "**interacting with digital systems from a gender lens**" and the launch of the [inclusion website](#). The event closed with a participatory session with the COP participants.

## Context setting and launch of the COP

The Community of Practice: ID is envisioned to function as a learning network that convenes and gives voices to subject matter experts, community-based organisations and other entities working towards improving people's interactions with technology. These entities either conduct research, implement programs, or engage with stakeholders of digital ID systems in some capacity. As part of its goal, the COP hopes to identify what challenges women face when engaging with digital ID systems and generate actionable research on how these challenges can be addressed through robust multi-stakeholder strategies.

For the first meeting, the initial steering committee provided the participants a background on digital systems and digital identity systems through 2 knowledge sessions. The meeting further articulated the importance of factoring the online and offline components that could help inform and build inclusive digital systems. Focussing on the identified themes, the COP hopes to continuously engage with key levers of change that enable and empower the stakeholders it interacts with.

For this effort, the COP hopes to foster original research with collaborators that strengthen inclusive system design. It will also consolidate relevant research in the space that would further inform inclusive strategies when building such systems. To effectively manage and leverage the knowledge, insights and resources created through this initiative, an online repository has been developed to consolidate and access relevant resources on gender inclusion in technology.

## Understanding digital systems

The first virtual session of the COP focussed on **understanding women's interaction with the broader digital ecosystem** at the onset. Following this, the sessions will shift to understand interactions that women have specifically with digital IDs. The first session explored three key topics:

- Challenges faced by women when engaging with digital systems
- The barriers that women face when accessing information
- Associated socio-normative constraints and safety concerns

Women face various challenges when engaging with digital systems, that range from awareness of digital systems available, accessing specific types of technology and the usage of these digital solutions. This digital divide can limit women's ability to access and leverage digital IDs and could exclude them from accessing various services. Inability to engage and participate in their digital ecosystems could further exacerbate women's participation within their physical surroundings.

Subsequent COP sessions will explore key themes and topics within the scope of the initiative. While these topics may not be exhaustive, they hope to serve as the starting point to understand the challenges that women face to effectively engage in their digital ecosystems.

# Knowledge Sessions

## Knowledge Session 1

### **Making digital systems work for women: Challenges and experiences**

***Dr. Sarayu Natarajan, Aapti Institute***

As part of their work, Aapti engages with various questions around technology design and governance principles that strengthen the participation and interaction of people within their physical and digital ecosystems. From these engagements, Dr. Natarajan shared insights about how women continue to face several challenges caused by a variety of socio-political, normative, economic and other structural forces. While highlighting the advantages for building inclusive systems, some of the key insights were:

- Women continue to face challenges with awareness, access, and continued usage of digital systems.
- Existing systems design use a value chain approach and build solutions that originate from a particular process or function.
- Globally, women are the most impacted when it comes to isolated system design, resulting in exclusionary practices and amplification of existing societal challenges.

To address these challenges more meaningfully, she emphasised that understanding how women interact with digital systems, at the various stages of development and deployment is critical for system design.

## Takeaways

- **Examining gender holistically:** In addition to building systems that address functional and economic concerns, incorporating gender inclusive thinking at the structural level can include women within their digital and physical ecosystems and communities.

- **Understanding the stakeholder journey:** Women face unique issues that might persist due to existing societal challenges. These challenges often vary depending on context, however understanding these nuances through a user journey approach would allow for more robust system analysis.
- **Solving online and offline challenges parallelly:** If challenges are addressed using isolated approaches, newer challenges could potentially emerge. Parallelly incorporating the learnings from Human Technology Interaction (HTI) thinking is key to building truly robust systems.

## Knowledge Session 2

### Embedding gender inclusion in design

#### Professor Anita Sarma and Ms. Puja Agarwal, Oregon State University

The [GenderMag framework](#) helps identify and assess inclusivity bugs that emerge during systems design. Using a gender and cognitive walkthrough approach, the framework deepens the understanding of technology developers to identify possible pain points that women might face when interacting with technology interfaces.

As part of their work, Professor Sarma and Ms. Agarwal highlighted how women typically interact with an 'One Time Password' (OTP) interface and the possible decision-making challenges they might encounter. Their work over the last decade sheds light on:

- The variance in the way people interact with tools, and systems that are often built using specific approaches could exclude certain groups of people.
- Inclusivity bugs often lie dormant or invisible in software and tools. These bugs individually might not impact effective usage, however collectively they might hinder overall usage.
- These bugs often appear as 'cognitive taxes' that are paid by the user.

The GenderMag framework uses a persona-based approach to help 'build tools the way humans think and not force humans to think the way tools are built'.

## Takeaways

- **Building for the entire facet spectrum:** Population groups are not represented by a specific persona type within these facets - users might lie anywhere across the facet spectrum identified below. However, identifying where people lie within each facet spectrum allows developers to build tools that include the entire spectrum. This often makes tools easier to use across various population groups. The facets devised for the GenderMag walkthrough are:
  - Motivations
  - Information Processing Style
  - Computer Self-efficacy
  - Attitude towards risk
  - Exploring and tinkering traits
- **Understanding the why and where:** All systems have varying levels of inclusivity bugs that exist within them - these may differ in specific functional software and tools. Methodologies like the GenderMag framework identify where such bugs might exist, how they surface, and what recourse can be prioritised to address them. This walkthrough is conducted in tandem with the development team to embed inclusive thinking during system design.
- **Intuitive and simple design thinking and design:** While all personas and facets should be kept in mind, addressing these bugs using this method helps improve overall usage and interaction. Using the analogy of a 'curved curb', the team shared how solutions and recourse don't always have to be complex - sometimes simple solutions help larger population groups.



## Participatory session

As part of this initiative, perspectives brought forth by the participating entities are key when building out a deeper understanding of various contexts. Entities that were part of the first virtual session were from Ethiopia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India. The participatory session helped understand the work of the participating entities and what they hope to achieve from such an initiative.

- **Ace Advisors:**

- Work to strengthen the digital sector and contribute to the SDGs, especially from the lens of gender.
- Goals from the COP: As a women led organisation, the team hope to understand how to strengthen their research and program design. They hope to do this by engaging with the participating organisations.

- **Civika Asian Development Academy**

- Work through social labs on innovation, leadership and social impact on finance inclusion and education.
- Goals from the COP: The team hope to leverage the COP as an opportunity to cultivate community engagement and co-create relevant knowledge on gender inclusion and digital identities. The knowledge sessions helped broaden their understanding around inbuilt biases that exist in technological systems.

- **FIT-ED**

- Work with teachers through Teacher Professional Development at Scale Coalition (TPD). FIT-ED hopes to strengthen outreach to teachers, especially women at scale.
- Goals from the COP: The team hopes to understand nuances of how digital systems and technology can enable women empowerment. They hope to use ICT to make learning more scalable and tackle specific concerns such as responsible data safeguarding and management.

- **Chrysalis**

- Work in Sri Lanka on economic empowerment and independence of women by enabling access to dignified work with goals of inclusion and diversity. The team works with women, supporting them to interact with e-commerce platforms, connecting them to digital platforms, and capacity building them on digital tools.
- Goals from the COP: The team hopes to use the COP initiative to learn and connect with communities to interface, experiment, and enable digital ID systems and improve engagement within those communities.

- **MOSIP**

- Goals from the COP: To engage effectively in the ecosystem, MOSIP is hoping to engage with civil society and academic organisations to help inform more inclusive system thinking and design. Identifying the role that technologists play, MOSIP is hoping to engage in this COP to help strengthen ecosystem gender inclusive thinking and practices.

- **Aapti Institute**

- Goals from the COP: To meaningfully engage in this space, Aapti hopes to collaboratively build out a deeper understanding of how global populations interact with digital ID systems, what challenges they face and how these challenges can be addressed by various stakeholders to empower a more equitable ecosystem.

## Next steps

The COP hopes to convene participants and members once every 2 months to co-create tools, frameworks, and research that inform robust digital system design. In the interim, the ISC hope to:

- Consolidate more relevant resources on the COP microsite. This could be work being done by participants or by other entities working in the space.
- Interact with participating entities to present insights and learnings from their work to help inform the larger group.
- Create avenues for effective communication and knowledge exchange.
- Invite entities that work in similar spaces from identified countries.



Aapti Institute works at the intersection of technology and society to explore questions of equity, access and inclusivity within the digital ecosystem. As part of this goal, Aapti generates evidence and provide actionable recommendations to strengthen inclusive systems design to various stakeholders.



MOSIP (Modular Open-Source Identification Platform) was incubated at IIT Bangalore as a global digital public good. The platform's modular architecture, easy configuration, open standards, open-source code, and customisation abilities give countries the flexibility to build their foundational digital ID systems in a cost-effective manner. MOSIP was built on a strong bedrock of principles for security and privacy.